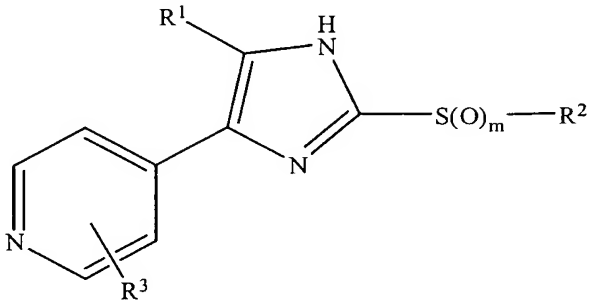
IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claims 1-15 (Canceled).

Claim 16 (Currently Amended): A 2-thio-substituted imidazole derivative compound of the formula I



wherein

R^1 is aryl which may or may not be substituted by a halogen atom;

R^2 is selected from the group consisting of

a) aryl-C_1-C_4-alkyl, and

b) C_1-C_6-alkyl;

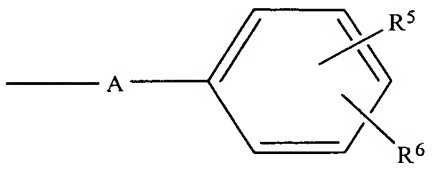
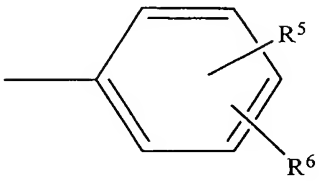
R^3 is selected from the group consisting of

a) NR^4R^{10}

b) ~~NR^7COR^8~~ NR^7COR^{10}, and

c) C_1-C_6-alkoxy;

R^4 is H;

R^{10} is  or 

or, if R^3 is NR^7COR^{10}, is R^8,

R^5 and R^6, which may be identical or different, are H, halogen, C_1-C_6-alkoxy or C_1-C_6-alkyl;

R^7 is H, C_1-C_6-alkyl or benzyl;

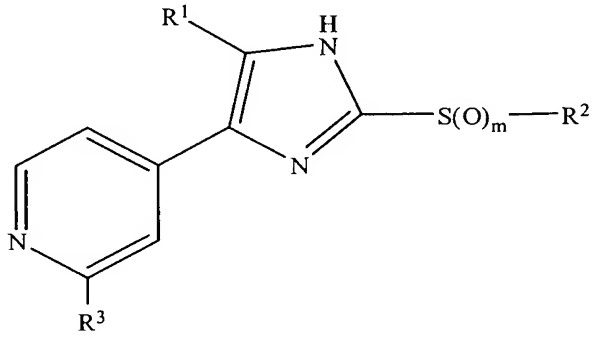
R^8 is C_1-C_4-alkyl, C_3-C_6-cycloalkyl or phenyl, where the phenyl group may have one or two substituents independently of one another selected from the group consisting of C_1-C_4-alkyl, C_1-C_4-alkoxy and halogen;

A is straight-chain or branched C_1-C_6-alkylene or C_2-C_6-alkenylene and

m is 0, 1 or 2;

or a tautomer, an optical isomer or a physiologically acceptable salt thereof.

Claim 17 (Previously Presented): The compound as claimed in claim 16, which has the formula Ia:



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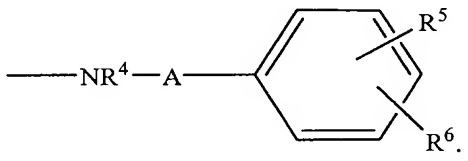
Claim 18 (Previously Presented): The compound as claimed in claim 16, wherein R^3 is



Claim 19 (Previously Presented): The compound as claimed in claim 18, wherein A is C_1-C_2-alkylene.

Claim 20 (Previously Presented): The compound as claimed in claim 18, wherein A is ethylidene.

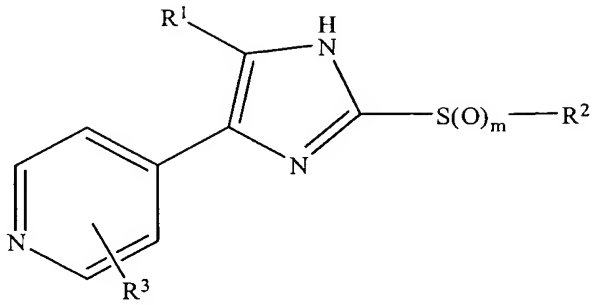
Claim 21 (Previously Presented): The compound as claimed in claim 18, wherein R^5 and R^6 are H.

Claim 22 (Previously Presented): The compound as claimed in claim 16, wherein R^1 is 4-fluorophenyl.

Claim 23 (Previously Presented): A pharmaceutical composition, comprising at least one compound as claimed in claim 16, and one or more pharmaceutically acceptable carriers and/or additives.

Claim 24 (Previously Presented): A method for treating inflammatory disorders in which TNF-α and IL-β are involved which comprises administering to a person in need of such a treatment an amount of a compound as claimed in claim 16 sufficient to have anti-inflammatory action.

Claim 25 (Currently Amended): A 2-thio-substituted imidazole derivative compound of the formula I



wherein

R^1 is aryl which is substituted by a halogen atom or by halo-C_1-C_6-alkyl;

R^2 is selected from the group consisting of

a) aryl-C_1-C_4-alkyl, and

b) C_1-C_6-alkyl;

R^3 is selected from the group consisting of

a) NR^4R^{10},

b) NR^7COR^{10},

c) OR^{10}, and

d) NH_2;

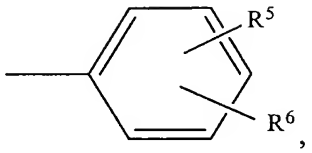
R^4 is H, -COR^{14}, -CO_2R^{14}, -$CONH_2$, -$CONHR^{14}$, -CHR^{16}-OR^{14}, -CHR^{16}-O-COR^{14}, -$COC(R^{16})_2$-OH, -COR^{15}, SO_2R^{15} or -SO_2R^{14}, R^{14} is C_1-C_6-alkyl or CF_3, R^{15} is phenyl or tolyl, and R^{16} is H or C_1-C_6-alkyl;

R^5 and R^6, which may be identical or different, are H, halogen, C_1-C_6-alkoxy, C_1-C_6-alkyl or halo-C_1-C_6-alkyl;

R^7 is H;

R^{10} has one of the meanings below:

a) A — B,

b) 

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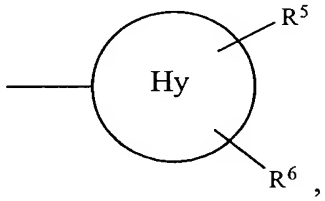
c) 

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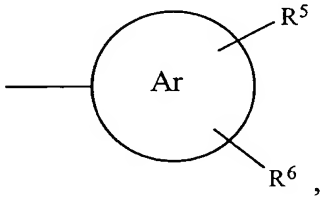
d) 

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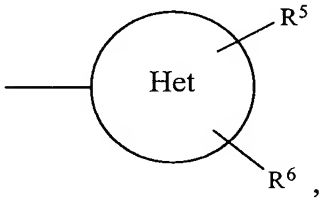
e) 

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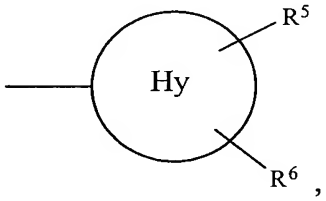
f) C_1-C_6-alkyl which is substituted by 2 phenyl groups, or

g) trifluoromethyl;

A is straight-chain or branched C_1-C_6-alkylene or C_2-C_6-alkenylene;

B is selected from the group consisting of

a) H,

b) 

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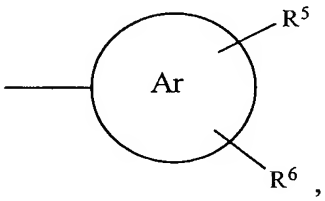
c) 

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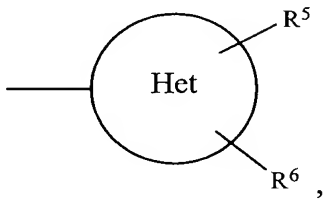
d) 

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e) OC_1-C_6-alkyl, and

f) OH;

Hy is a 3- to 10-membered non-aromatic mono-, bi- or tricyclic carbocycle which may or may not be fused with a benzene ring;

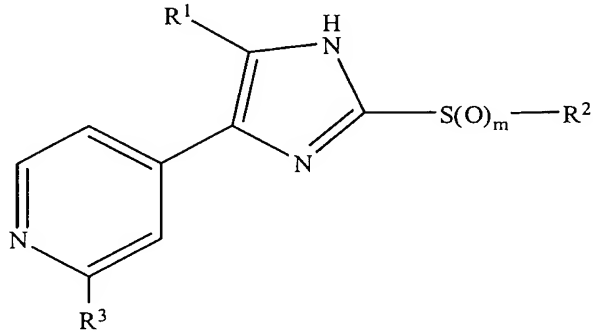
Ar is a 5- or 6-membered aromatic heterocycle which has 1, 2 or 3 heteroatoms independently of one another selected from the group consisting of O, S and N and which may or may not be fused with a benzene ring;

Het is a 5- or 6-membered non-aromatic heterocycle which has 1, 2 or 3 heteroatoms independently of one another selected from the group consisting of O, S and N which may or may not be fused with a benzene ring and which may or may not be bridged bicyclically or tricyclically;

m is 0, 1 or 2;

or a tautomer, an optical isomer or a physiologically acceptable salt thereof.

Claim 26 (Previously Presented): The compound as claimed in claim 25, which has formula Ia:



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Claim 27 (Previously Presented): The compound as claimed in claim 25, wherein R^{10} is A-B and B is selected from the group consisting of OC_1-C_6-alkyl and OH.

Claim 28 (Previously Presented): The compound as claimed in claim 25, wherein R^3 is NR^7COR^{10}, and R^{10} is selected from the group consisting of -O-C_1-C_4-alkylphenyl, phenyl and C_2-C_6-alkenyl which is substituted by phenyl.

Claim 29 (Previously Presented): The compound as claimed in claim 25, wherein A is C_1-C_2-alkylene.

Claim 30 (Previously Presented): The compound as claimed in claim 25, wherein A is ethylidene.

Claim 31 (Previously Presented): The compound as claimed in claim 25, wherein R^5 and R^6 are H.

Claim 32 (Previously Presented): The compound as claimed in claim 25, wherein R^1 is halogen-substituted phenyl or CF_3-substituted phenyl.

Claim 33 (Previously Presented): A pharmaceutical composition, comprising at least one compound as claimed in claim 25, and one or more pharmaceutically acceptable carriers and/or additives.

Claim 34 (Previously Presented): A method for treating inflammatory disorders in which TNF-α and IL-β are involved which comprises administering to a person in need of such a treatment an amount of a compound as claimed in claim 25 sufficient to have anti-inflammatory action.

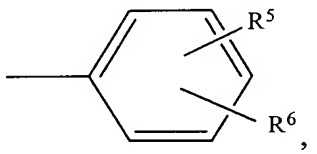
Claim 35 (Previously Presented): The compound as claimed in claim 25, which is {4-[5-(4-fluorophenyl)-2- methylsulfanyl-1H-imidazol-4-yl]-pyridin-2-yl}-(tetrahydropyran-4-yl)amine.

Claim 36 (Previously Presented): The method according to claim 24, wherein the inflammatory disorder is rheumatoid arthritis.

Claim 37 (Previously Presented): The method according to claim 34, wherein the inflammatory disorder is rheumatoid arthritis.

Claim 38 (New): The compound as claimed in claim 25, wherein R^{10} has one of the meanings below:

a) A — B,

b) 

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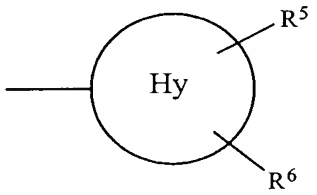
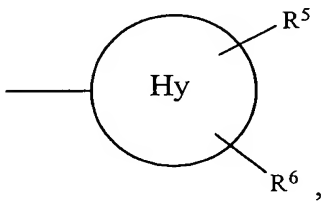
c) 

f) C_1-C_6-alkyl which is substituted by 2 phenyl groups, or

g) trifluoromethyl;

and when R^{10} is A-B, B is selected from the group consisting of

a) H,

b) 

,

e) OC_1-C_6-alkyl, and

f) OH.